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Gardiner Martin Lane

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BY THE STOEP.

Songs by the Stoep

BY

JOHN RUNCIE.

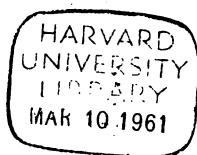
Illustrated by South African Artists

1905

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To
MY MOTHER,
WHO
IS DEAD.

THE Author desires to acknowledge his deep and lasting gratitude to that fine and representative body of Colonial artists who have so generously and enthusiastically taken upon themselves the duty of illustrating certain of his verses. Messrs. G. Crosland Robinson, Edward Roworth, Hugo Nande, G. Smithard, Mrs. Penstone, Miss Glossop, Messrs. Denis Santry, N. Egersdorfer, and F. W. B. Ross, are so well known in the world of South African Art, that merely to have their signatures appended to the dozen beautiful drawings illustrating this volume is sufficient guarantee, at least in this land of ample sun and distances, that the pictures will be of a high level of excellence. Line drawing, simple black and white, gives but a poor idea of the genius and ability of artists who dip their brushes in the glory of colour on our eternal hills and who create with brush and pigment such living lyrics of sea and shore. They have given, however, the author of their best, freely and without price, although the medium prescribed was in some cases unfamiliar, and whatever interest may be in the text itself is certainly doubly enhanced by the inclusion of the illustrations of these gifted Colonial artists.

LIST OF ARTISTS.

G. CROSLAND ROBINSON, President of South African
Society of Artists (*Frontispiece: By the Stoep*).

EDWARD ROWORTH (*A Pagan Hymn*).

EDWARD ROWORTH (*Worn Hands*).

HUGO NANDE (*Crossing the Hex Mountains*).

G. SMITHARD (*Van Riebeeek and I*).

G. SMITHARD (*A Slumber Song of The Gardens*).

MRS. PENSTONE (*Calvary*).

MRS. PENSTONE (*"Once in a Garden"*).

DENIS SANTRY (*Adventure*).

MISS GLOSSOP (*The Greatest Quest is Peace*).

N. EGERSDORFER (*The Jock's Prayer*).

F. W. B. ROSS (*Blue Hills Far Away*).

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SONGS BY THE STOEP.

Stoep Philosophy.

The moon comes drifting from the sea,
Above my stoep the stars are beating ;
I watch the night moths lazily
Behind the tamarisk trees retreating.
Why should I worry, fume, or fret,
Because so many folk are richer,
If fate with genial kindness yet
Shall fill my plate and pipe and pitcher?

A glass of dop, if old and musty,
I do not yet disdain to treble ;
Or "Hermitage," if pure and crusty,
(Who likes may buy a foreign label).
These things are not a great ambition :
Some folks prefer a dainty cellar,
And some a more material mission
Than lies in lunar dreams or stellar.

Each man, I think, must have his weakness,
And mine is simply drowsy lazing.
Those draughts that come with velvet sleekness,
And clothe themselves in gentle phrasing
I much prefer ; I do not yearn
For hustling schemes of power and money,
The while the eyes of darkness burn
Because somewhere the light is sunny.

Here by my stoep the moths are drifting
On glimmering wings between the aloes ;
My pipe is like a dream uplifting
In aureoles and wreaths and halos ;
All ends in smoke, and dust, and quiet,
And so I love these things ethereal,
That, far removed from strife and riot,
Are palpable, if immaterial.



*"Titania's maidens bring,
Happy dreams of happy Dixie to the people slumbering."*

A Slumber Song of the Gardens.

*"I'se gwine home to Dixie,
I'se gwine no more to wander."*

—OLD PLANTATION DITTY.

Soft haze upon the mountain and a haze upon
the sea,

High noon above the Gardens and shadows
on the way;

And twenty weary people slipping out of time
awee,—

Out of time and out of trouble, on a hot
midsummer's day.

Blow softly, silver trumpets, in a fairy serenade,
Ye lilies of St. Joseph, swinging lightly over-
head.

In the shadows of the Gardens the wearied come
to rest,

In the spacious dusk and quiet the fevered
blood is stilled;

While sleep, on tiptoe stepping, lays aside the
hopeless quest,

Takes away the fag of travel and the promise
unfulfilled;

In white and gold and purple the wondrous
petals gleam;

In white and gold and purple is the wondrous
slope of dream.

Here be ever Jew and Gentile, Briton, German,
Dago, Pole,—

Mostly young and mostly reckless, some un-
kempt or liquor-stained ;

Here and there a grizzled hobo, or bepainted,
dragged troll ;

Here and there an eager seeker for the
labour yet ungained ;

Not alone for rank or station may Titania's
maidens bring

Happy dreams of happy Dixie to the people
slumbering.

Here's a lad—and ne'er a razor licked the
smoothness of his chin,—

Curly-headed, slim and supple, coiled within a
corner seat,

Worn at heel, and frayed at elbow, blistered foot,
and roughened skin—

God ! how far we have to wander for a little
bread to eat !

Puck, who puts on mortal eyelids filmy cobwebs,—
hither, quick !

Take the boy across the water, he is ill or
mammy-sick.

Fires of life among your ashes, what have ye to
give or gain,

In that haggard shell and ancient, snoring on
with mouth agape?

What among your outworn pleasures hold ye
now, and what remain

Heartsome still,—a rank old cutty and a little
juice of grape?

Still, with these a man may travel to the last
foot-weary mile,

Halting for a dream of Dixie in the Garden
depths awhile.

In the mine's untrammelled shanty or Johannes-
burg caboose

O'er the cards and vicious whisky, men may
query in a jest,

How she struck the trail to Cape Town in her
paint and lacquered shoes,

With her skirt's pathetic draggle, hopeless,
weary like the rest.

Here, within the pure bright Gardens, let the
fairy folk undo

What the mortal folk have made her, for a
blissful hour or two.

Evermore through sun and shadow wefting down
 upon the grass,
Take the dreamers back to Dixie—wheresoever
 that may be,—
To the lost hearth and the mother, to the lost
 youth and the lass,
Over all the plains and mountains, over all the
 leagues of sea :
All roads but lead to quiet, though the heat and
 noise be long,—
Grace for the sleepers, by your leave, and this
 their slumber song !



A PAGAN HYMN.

A Pagan Hymn.

I have drunk the Sea's good wine,
And to-day
Care has bowed his head and gone away.

I have drunk the Sea's good wine;
Was ever step so light as mine,
Was ever heart so gay?

Old voices intermingle in my brain,
Voices that a little boy might hear;
And dreams like fiery sunsets come again,
Informulate and vain,
But great with glories of the buccaneer.

Oh, thanks to thee, great Mother, thanks to
thee
For this old joy renewed,
For tightened sinew and clear blood imbued
With sunlight and with sea.

Behold, I sing a Pagan song of old,
And out of my full heart
Hold forth my hands that so I would enfold
The Infinite thou art.

What matter all the creeds that come and go,
The many gods of men?
My blood outcasts them from its joyous flow,
And it is now as then—
The Pearl of Morning, and the Sapphire Sea,
The Diamond of Noon,
The Ruby of the Sunset,—these shall be
My creed, my Deity ;
And I will take some old forgotten tune,
And rhythm frolic-free,
And sing in little words thy wondrous boon,
O Sunlight and O Sea.

Paul Kruger.

Not on these shores his bier is made,
He died an exile, far away ;
Old, old and weary, broken, gray,
Glad now of rest, Oom Paul is dead.

Not ours to picture in this hour,
His vanished dream, his humbled pride ;
The dead sleep gently side by side,
The living dream of pride and power.

Great will of adamant, and brain
Begotten of the storm and stress
That filled the wild old wilderness,
And mocked at toil, and grief, and pain—

You mocked at us, and scorned our aim,
That, set in freedom, strives to make
All men as free as we, who break
All bonds that bind with hurt and shame.

No matter,—all the decades go
To dusty death, and hate decays ;
Large charity outlives always
The little wrath of foe and foe.

Farewell, old Paul ! We, too, may feel
Such pride as any, that the land
Bears such as thou to take command,
In other years of woe or weal.

For My Ain Folk.

Yesternight I heard one say
 Just an auld Scots canny line,
 Something that I hear to-day
 Sobbing back to auld lang syne;
 "Michty me," say Jess and Jean,
 Sitting by their door or sill,—
 "Bigger fule was never seen,
Whaur' is he stravaigin' till?"

Gossip wives have sharpened wits
 (Ah! ye mind them long ago),
 Each one talking as she knits
 In the gloaming that we know;
 Knitting round the stocking heel,
 Knitting gossip, good or ill,—
 Fool and sage, and saint and de'il,
Whaur' are ye stravaigin' till?

Praise my ain folk? Nay, not here ;
Other folk will sing their praise.
Pipe the morning out, my dear,
O thou lark in summer days ;
Flute, O mavis, in the whin,
Rage, O merle, along the hill,
Linnet, sing the evening in ;
Whaur' are we stravaigin' till ?

West, and East, and far away,
Leagues ayont the Hills o' Hame,
Pass me back the line to-day,
Ye that share our people's fame ;
Pass me back the canny line,
With the heartsome tone and thrill,
Warming in the blood like wine,—
Whaur' are ye stravaigin' till ?

Fire o' blossom round the brae,
Whin a-bloom and heather bell,
Gowan snow along the way,
Siller burn and caller well—
Here we tell the winsome "lee"
(Aiblins, too, wi' muckle skill),—
Hame was heaven ! here's to ye,
Whaur' are ye stravaigin' till ?

Far outbye the race is flung,—
Sage and fool and saint and de'il,
Sober lip or "drucken" tongue,
Brawny loon or clever chiel—
Just a "first foot" at your door
With the New Year's chime and thrill,
Just a canny line—no more—
" *What are ye stravaigin' till?* "

Van Riebeek.

Mayhap it was the Lady Moon,
 Or that dream-laden opiate,
 "Magaliesberg," when hours were late,
 And wakeful crickets shrilled their tune ;

Or maybe 'twas the soul of grape,
 That as the eve of Christmas drew
 To Christmas morning, woke anew
 The old-world shadows of the Cape.

I saw Van Riebeek standing near,
 In leathern jerkin, sword in hand ;
 His boat was beached upon the sand,
 And three sea-lights were burning clear.

A little man he seemed to me,
 Thick-set and firm and keenly eyed,
 Broad-belted, gloved, and hatted wide,
 With buckled shoe and hosened knee.

Like one who, musing, seemed to know
 The fancies thronging through my mind,
 He answered what my glance defined,
 With that quaint grace of long ago :—



"I saw Van Riebeeck standing near."

- “ Lo, ye have built your city white,
Where once a little fort was raised,
And where the lumbering zeekoe grazed,
Your Noël carols ring to-night.
- “ And where a day's march could not span,
A little hour will set you down
In comfort in your Simon's Town,
Without a fear for beast or man.
- “ From here to yon far River's flow,
Your Royal flag is floating free ;
'Twas Cromwell's flag we met at sea,
When Tromp and Blake fought long ago.
- “ How far anon your way may bend,
The Book of Fate alone foretells ;
Mayhap your steel-drawn parallels
Will bind these countries end to end.
- “ How far ye go in days to be
I know not, but in days gone by,
Behold ! the light in yon dark sky
Was kindled by our folk and me.
- “ Ye may forget ! In this large day
What boots a little fort or kraal,
With teeming street and window'd wall,
And crowded wharves of Table Bay ?

“ But this I say, and this I know,
 Whatever scribes may think or write,—
 Behold, behind one man is Night,
And from one man the Tale must flow.”

And then he passed. The Bay was bright
 With riding lights, but like a smoke,
 Three high-poop'd ships in canvas broke,
And drifted swiftly out of sight.



A Song in Season.

I heard one say : Ye have so little faith
 In this great land, because of years grown
 lean,
 That straightway in a gust of wailing breath,
 Your words come harsh and mean.

Fulfilled in æons lost to seer or scribe,
 Your harvest home was led through rock and
 loam,
 God swept aside each dark and murdering tribe,
 For men to make a home.

From war and tumult ye have lain forspent,
 Mouthing at quibbles which in smiles may
 cease ;
 And turning back along the path ye went,
 Ye drown the eyes of Peace.

By grain or gold or gem shall ye fulfil
 That destiny enscrolled on rock and mire ?
 Nay, not by these, but by one common will
 That may not halt or tire.

Some cry a curse upon the golden dust,
Holding it leagued with evil for our bane ;
So, too, are all things rank with pride and lust,
So, too, are all things vain.

Roar on, O Rand ! by day or red-lit night.
I see men build, I hear the roar of trade ;
Even so the foundry furnace, wide and white,
Shall win the toilers bread.

I see the sluices opening far and near
On famished spaces of the wan Karroo,
And little dorps come closer year by year
With fields and orchards new ;

Even so the far-led water shall attest
The mine's wide largesse to the desert brown,
And sweet lucerne against the farmer's breast
Shall win his beeves renown.

Blue hills a-dream in hazes of the noon,
Wide silent spaces of the lonely sun,
Wan pastures calling for their only boon,
And oh, so much undone !

So much undone ! The decades, drifting by,
Gather the futile dust of idle days,
While underneath your blue and matchless sky
The land's mute prayer always.

Bind closer race to race and state to state ;
Go forward, one in purpose, faith, and aim ;
They live the best who labour on, elate,
Through sacrifice and shame.

By stamp and plough and furnace ye may wake
A vast and federate land to nobler life ;
But what is all your work unless ye make
An end of racial strife ?

To
Master Anthon Anrijt,
 Craftsman in Wood and Stone.*

I pluck a flower this summer day, a little rose of
 rhyme,
 For Master Anthon Anrijt and sunny Christmas
 time,
 When all our snow is blooms ablowl, while Noël
 carols chime.

I pluck a flower for one that lived, and dying
 left a name
 For honest work and honest art that none may
 slight or shame ;
 In wood and stone he carved alone his epitaph
 and fame.

He took the raw wood in his hand and shaped
 it to his plan,
 His chisel caught the lion's pride, the smooth
 grace of the swan ;
 Through stone or wood he drove a mood as
 only genius can.

* A tribute suggested by the beautiful old carven pulpit in the Dutch Reformed Church, Cape Town.

From out his pulpit flows the Word in that wide
kirk and fair

From Noël dawn to Noël dawn, the sermon and
the prayer,—

A hundred times have Noël chimes rung o'er his
pulpit there ;

But statelier than the preacher's tone, the living
wood uprears

The story of a craftsman's faith in old war-weary
years

That found alone in wood and stone a theme
that lives and cheers.

He gave our people of his best ; that best his
people spurned ;

And we may thank the jealous hand which broke
his pride, and turned

His sorrow's spate to flaming hate, and wrecked
the work he mourned.

In other years men's eyes will turn to nobler
arts of peace,

And Noël dawns will rise anew on Time's serene
increase,

While mine and field shall give their yield, and
art her old surcease.

The eyes beyond the present's need unlidded
towards the past,
Shall find old beacons clear of mist and know
their worth at last,
When state and state are federate, and hate is
overcast.

So men will write of Anrijt then far more than
I can sing,
And read his soul along his lines of finest
chiselling,—
That stone and wood had understood while fools
were quarrelling.

I pluck a flower this summer day, a little rose
of rhyme,
For Master Anthon Anrijt and sunny Christmas
time,
Though all our snow is blooms ablown, while Noël
carols chime.



" . . . the pass
Where the rails are like threads of silver."

Crossing the Hex Mountains.

At Tweefontein in the moonlight the little white
tents shine,

And a cry comes out of the darkness from those
who guard the line;

The panting heart of the engine pulses through
the resting cars,

And beyond are the quiet mountains, and above
are the quiet stars.

Sinister rise the mountains, jagged and bleak and
bare,

Cloven and rent and fissured by fire and torrent
there ;

But the Moon is a tender lady that loves not
sights like these,

And in her spell transfigured, all things must
soothe and please.

Far on the veld behind us shone the steel-drawn
parallels,

And beneath was the famished river fed by the
famished wells,

And behind the shuttered windows, and beneath
the hooded light,
Folk in the train were sleeping through all the
wondrous night.

But I was out on the platform waiting the whistle
shrill,

That would break in a lustre of echoes right on
the face of the hill,

Break on the face of the mountain and lose them-
selves in the pass

Where the rails are like threads of silver, and the
boulders smooth as glass.

Forth with the grinding of couplings, the hissing
and snorting of steam,

Till the rails spun out behind her like spider threads
agleam,

Till she roared at the foot of the mountain and
brawled through the echoing glen,

Roaring, rocking, and ringing out her pæan of
conquering men.

Right to the edge of a boulder, ominous, big, and
black ;

Plucking our hearts to our parching throats with
fear for the open track ;

Then forth like a driving piston straight from its
iron sheath,
Till the wind stormed down on our faces, and we
could not see nor breathe.

Looping, climbing, and falling, panting and swoop-
ing she sped,
Like a snake at the foot of the mountain, with her
great white lamp ahead ;
Shouldering the heavy gradients, heedless of
breathing spells,
And racing away like a maddened steed down
the sloping parallels.

Then out of De Doorns she thundered and over
the starved Karroo,
Dwindling the hills behind her, farther and farther
she flew ;
And I know not which to praise the more—these
moon-shot hills of God
Or the genius of the men who planned and made
the glorious road.

Stellenbosch.

Purple hills around thee set,
Ancient oak and water cold,
Even as in wild days of old
When raiders down the pass have met
Thy marksmen trained upon the hill ;
The Papagaai, with care and skill.

Little town whose birth and name
Holds with time the second place
After our White City's grace ;
Van der Stel, and his good name,
Surely we may not forget
While Stellenbosch abideth yet.

Peace be with thee and thy folk,
Learning walks in cap and gown
Through thy Streets, O leafy Town,
Blest with vineyards, herd and flock ;
Surely all these things are well,
Ancient Simon van der Stel.

The Veld Folk.

In these great spaces they abide for ever,
 Nor may they hive in cities even as we,
 Whose toil from crowded shire and teeming river
 Finds markets oversea.

Nor they, like Israel whom the Lord befriended,
 With flock and herd and bountiful increase,
 Were searched by war, that so when war was
 ended,
 All men might dwell in peace.

Upon their lives the sun and moon slow-swinging
 Through days and years o'er vast untroubled
 skies,
 Have wrought an affluent peace, a love fast-
 clinging
 To freedom large and wise.

By narrow laws we judge the farmer people,
 Whose larger outlook we would fain gainsay,
 Even as we fain would coop beneath a steeple
 The God to whom we pray.

God gave the Law in lightning and in thunder
To that lost nation bann'd and unredeemed,—
A pastoral people, whom He swept asunder
Because of Baal they dreamed.

Even so to these, the Veld Folk, God hath given
The near communion in His Temple vast,
Wherein He speaketh yet, in awful levin,
And in the thunder blast.

We judge by roaring loom and crowded harbour,
By teeming street and plenteous gear and gold,
Where Greatness dwells; and yet within an arbour
Sits Wisdom as of old.

All men conserve their Faith who, dwelling lonely
In those vast breadths of kopje, stream, and
plain,
Fulfil their happiness by reason only
That wealth to them is vain,—

That wealth is vain, and Freedom more than cattle;
Ay, more than life, as when in troubled shires
Of old were gathered up to awful battle
Our own victorious sires.

“For those who Sow Dispeace.”

Let him who wakes the racial hate be set
apart to-day,
Nor give him sanction of a word to utter or
gainsay,
But let him feel the leper's ban, be outcast from
his kind,
For God has sealed the anger up and set a veil
behind.

Here little time is left for work and there is
much to do,
And kind words said in season are ever wise
and true.
Behold the grace of Peace hath come to comfort
and to heal,
And who are ye that sow dispeace against the
common weal?

Ye are the evil harbingers, kin of the devil's
kin,

Who traffic in the lust of lies, and reck not of
the sin.

Behold in England far away and here in this
great land,

The anger of all honest folks shall find ye and
shall brand.

For Peace hath come to heal the wounds and
dry the stinging tears,

And bind and knit as one great folk the foes of
darker years ;

To knit and bind and weld as one the men who
fought so long,

Who being tried within the fire have grown
more great and strong.

But not with ye who have no faith except in
greed and lies,

Shall rest the triumph of the Peace in days
more calm and wise,

When these our folk are gathered up to face
their destiny ;

Better for you the sheltering crags or lonely
wastes of sea.

For war has been, and war is past, and with
us now is peace ;

The wreck of years we have to clear against
the large increase ;

Against the dawn of hope and calm be steadfast,
stern and true,

Nor hearken to the vacuous gibes of these, the
faithless few.

Ah ! leave not any more, Lord God, the
Councils of the State,

But set one aim for race and race, one
Commonwealth, one fate ;

Unseal the frontiers of our hate, and open wide
the land,

That men who fought as foe and foe, as friend
and friend may stand.

Two Wives.

"During the proceedings, Mrs. De la Rey, who stood a few yards distant, came forward and in a motherly way placed herself behind Mrs. Chamberlain, and when the Secretary of State finished speaking, she was most heartily applauded."—*Report of Mr. Chamberlain's visit to Lichtenburg.*

One from her boudoir's dainty ease
 Had crossed the unfamiliar seas ;
 The other, daughter of the veld,
 Among her people lived and dwelt.
 One came to view the wasted land,
 To see, to hear, and understand ;
 And one through many a night and day,
 To aching dread was oft a prey.
 Both realised in different lives
 The husbands' duties and the wives' ;
 The pathos of a wasting strife ;
 The storm and stress of public life.
 To each was given a woman's heart,
 That patiently fulfils its part ;
 Yet one mayhap had sorrowed most,
 For in the flames her home was lost,
 And bitterness is loth to go
 From hearts that war hath tortured so.

Meeting as strangers, yet they drew
To friendship as the minutes flew ;
And so I read the lesson clear
That noble women there and here
Can better knit the broken strands
By healing words and willing hands ;
For unto them the power is given
To league with all the host of heaven,
And so achieve in different spheres
The grace that soothes, the hope that
 cheers.

Via Teneriffe.

With Christmas fires of home alight
For other hearts than ours, we steamed
Past Margate's windows in the night,
And Dover's, burning keen and bright ;
The racing Channel past us streamed.

"That's Beachy Head," a lean man said,
And having spoken went his way
With easy stride and bended head,
To watch the water as it sped
Across each port-hole's steady ray.

Dark on our quarter, dark and vast,
A cruiser at her anchor rode ;
And somehow, as we drifted past,
A silence from her shape was cast,
And whispers only ebbd and flowed.

She flashed no light, and yet we knew
She watched us from low-lidded eyes,
And heard the beating of our screw,
On that still water as we drew
Towards Plymouth, where our tender plies.

Good-night to England, and good-bye !

We love her best who go afar
To win the bread her shores deny,
And being men, at least to die
In glorious spaces won by war.

Grey morning and a racing sea,
With Ushant flicking, white and bare,
A friendly light to such as be
In terror, 'tween his light and thee,—
Brown, broken cape of Finisterre.

Then, pencilled on an opal sky,
The watchers saw the far-off brow
Of Teneriffe. We drew anigh
With shrieking siren, and a cry
From bow to bridge and bridge to bow.

Red morning, and the clattering crane
Broke up our slumber ; all about
The decks were humorous sons of Spain,
Black-avised, selling wares for gain
Tenfold, with vigorous shriek and shout.

Then league on league of windless swell,
With languorous mirth a week went by ;

Strange tableaux could the midnight tell
'Tween Cancer's utmost parallel
And Capricorn's; but let these die.

A thousand miles from Table Bay,
The wild south-easter dead ahead;
She washed her bows with sheet of spray,
And sent a few on deck to pray,
And sent the most below to bed.

Hard weather; from her thundering bow,
Great plumes of spindrift rise and hiss;
One-fifty knots we're making now
From noon to noon; but when or how
We'll make the Bay, the question is.

A word is passed from off the bridge,—
To-morrow morn we'll make the shore,
And far beyond the Blueberg ridge
Disperse, even to the farthest edge
Of this great land, and meet no more.

So be it! All things have their day,
Meeting and parting, who can tell
What fate betides us, ill or well?
The sun is bright on Table Bay,
The steamer's berthed, and so farewell.

“ Little Thornback.”

Amid the wind and spindrift on that historic
day,
Beneath the Blaauwberg Mountains their stricken
“ Haarlem ” lay ;
Was ever gale so fraught with fate again in Table
Bay ?

They found the cool sweet water, they saw the
land was good ;
Above them swung the splendid sun, o'er mountain,
plain and wood,
And the spirit of the soil cried out, and lo ! they
understood.

Here was the land for willing hands, for harvests
yet unborn,
For goodly vine, and pear and plum, and yellow
wheat and corn ;
And they passed the word to homing ships, and
home the word was borne.

And who looms now across the page of primal
storm and stress?

Van Riebeeck, "Little Thornback," come to rule
the wilderness,

To raise the fort, and build the hut, to guide and
ban and bless;

Quick-tempered, keen of eye and ear, the little
doctor seems

In belted coat and buckled shoe, more of romance
and dreams,—

A man set out in some rich light that by an altar
streams.

Great days were those of conquest, of sacrifice and
wrath.

The lion roared by garden gates, the leopard
watched the path,

And the vanished pools of Capetown, where the
lumbering hippos bath.

In these large days of progress the glory seems but
small;

We have built the gleaming city o'er the old-time
port and kraal,

And behold, to the far Zambesi our flag waves
over all,—

Yet here the tale beginneth, whatever pride may
be,

In affluent power and traffic from war and victory.
With the keen-eyed Little Thornback stepping
shoreward from the sea.

Crickets in the Grass.

Among the dry lean grasses,
Loudly the crickets sing,
And they care not all the summer,
As we of everything.
Fierce is the heat of the noontide,
Thick is the dust of the street ;
But the crickets sing in the starlight,
And for them the days are sweet.

Here for the dust that is golden,
Fiercely we crave and pine,
And we care not if hearts be broken
(Even your heart and mine),—
Men are but pawns on a chessboard,
In a game as cruel as fleet ;
But the crickets sing in the starlight,
And for them the days are sweet.

Blue are the noons of the southland
High over kopje and kloof ;
Cold are the skies of the homeland
Low over furrow and roof ;

Home for a time come the swallows,
And here for a time we meet
In the days of sunlight and starlight,
And I wonder if these be sweet.

Call me a halt at the Kaapstad,
Or trek to the Vale and beyond;
Or cover the seas to the Channel
And bide with the old folk and fond;
Weigh up the pleasures of roving,
And find me the joy that's complete,—
With the crickets that sing in the starlight
For to them the days are sweet.

The Jock's Prayer.

God in Thy mercy hear oor cry,
 For surely we be sinners a' ;
 In deep humility we try
 To walk within Thy perfect law.
 It's muckle mair would ithers seek :
 We ask but little, being meek.

The Boer is chosen, so he cries ;
 He kens Thee like an open book.
 It's nae for us to criticise,
 Nor meet Thy awful Holy look,
 Nor gie advice ; but this we ken,—
 Ye nicht hae chosen ither men.

We maun avow oor hopeless state,
 But Lord, Thou kens that canteen beer,
 Likewise the wimmen when they wait
 Beyond the barracks in the rear ;
 But Lord, next day, Thy holy hate,
 Doth make the sinner expiate.



*God in thy mercy hear oor cry,
For surely we be sinners a'*

If Thou direct the mauser's bore,
We maunna doot Thy wisdom's just ;
Nor e'en Thy shadow set before
Those chosen folk that broke their trust.
Still, if Thou needs must help the Dutch,—
Weel, time aboot would please us much.

Thou knowest how we strove and tried
On that dark morning closely filed ;
Thou knowest how the leader died,
Puir Wauchope,—ah, we were beguiled !
For duty done, we crave Thy praise ;
There's few are left to mend their ways !

Yea, we maun place oor trust in Thee,
Wha guards the kopjes with Thine arm ;
Stretch forth the ither, so that we
Likewise may shielded be frae harm.
Fair play, O Lord, or lift them baith,
Sae we hae equal chance wi' Death.

Cup-Courage.

Time for bed,—then let it be ;

Who cares for waking now the wine
Is done? what followeth after glee

But dangerous chaff? These eyes of mine
Ache with the light ; my brain is sore ;
Dawn is anigh, the clock's at four.

What weights me here like very lead?

I cannot rise from this deep-cushioned seat.
A fuming anger grown within my head,
Some idle word hath blazed me into heat ;
I saw him leer, and shot the glass across
The sodden table, littered now with loss.

What matter for the blow, the fall?

All these are paid for. Lo ; I felt
The sweetness of blind courage, that is all.

Little, ye say ; but I who erstwhile dwelt
In terror of two eyes, for one short span,
Cast off my fear and fought him man to man.



"... hearts that need
God's pity day by day."

Worn Hands.

I heard a voice from out a pulpit made
 Of rosy alabaster, in a temple paned
 And frescoed for the love of Him Who paid
 The ransom God ordained.

Spired to a gleaming point of burnished brass
 Within a grove of trees, that temple stands;
 The peace of twilight looks through pictured
 glass
 Painted by cunning hands.

I listened to the Preacher's weary drone,
 The booming organ, and the wafted psalm;
 I saw Christ's passion writ on glass and stone
 Deep in the saintly calm.

A prayer went up,—God knows that little heed
 To that dull orison mine ear could pay,—
 For such lean comfort to the hearts that need
 God's pity day by day.

The dusky calm seemed palpable, and fell
Upon me in a cool, slow-pouring flood,
Until my thoughts were bound as in a spell
That slept along my blood.

One bowed with years sat by me in a pew,
His hands devoutly clasped before his face,—
White, worn and feeble hands, whose veins
seemed blue
Fat worms that throve apace.

Slow droned the preacher's cold and ornate
prayer,
To fit the well-groomed folks' most easy creed,
That offers such to Him, whose sermons were
As simple as His need.

Behold another prayer cried up to Heaven,
From these worn hands beside me in the
pew:
"Lord, we are worn and feeble. Thou hast
given
"But little now to do.

"We may not crave Thy grace for bounties rich,
"Nor doles of mercy given unto Thy poor,

“Nor even for work that sings Thy glories
which

“Eternally endure ;

“Nor for a stainless wealth of kindly deeds

“Wherewith Thy Heaven is jewelled. We
must come

“Stained with the mire of sacrifice that pleads

“In worn hands weak and dumb,

“Foredoomed to bondage of the stubborn soil.

“The sun inwelling through the awful East

“Hath sealed the limit of our daily toil,

“To fend for man and beast.

“Lean recompense ! But Lord, we loved it
best,—

“The driven furrow in the chill, raw dawn,

“Harrowed and seeded ; only the peasant’s quest

“Simple and not withdrawn.

“What more to dare the battle or the foam,

“On heated markets in the smouldering town ?

“These for the laurels : we have found at home

“That toil is toil’s renown.

“Old men go gently to their separate rest ;

“The warrior’s heart subdues ; the poet’s song

"With twilight sweetness sings of strife repressed,

"And peace at last grown strong.

"Old age goes gently to Imperial Death

"Mantled in night, who, gazing isolate

"From Titan hills to dusky valleys, saith

"Come, now the hour is late.

"The hour is late and we have nought to show,

"Save miry labour in the streaming loam,

"A brood long flown, long toiled for, and the low

"Slow-dying fires of home,

"Let praise be given, we read Thy wisdom best,

"And affluent kindness in a faith close-sealed

"And virginal, that sought no dogma lest

"Thy face were unrevealed.

"We sacrificed with Thine own wearied land,

"In immemorial travail of the grain,

"With beast and bird that Life from out Thy
hand,

"Might feed, and Love might gain.

"Proud are we of the lot that makes us kin

"With Thy great servitors on earth and sea,

"That, questioning not, fulfil their meed and win

"But rest at length, as we.

“Above the million millions past and done,
“The powdering decades fall like finest dust;
“And they who filled the pathway of the sun,
“Are lying crust on crust.

“Obscure appears Thy purpose; men have found
“Grim irony with mercy beautiful,
“Quick horrors that confound the brain and wound
“The heart least pitiful.

“Confused and blinded, men foreclosed their faith,
“And sought in work salvation, and behold!
“With joy and hope renewed, they welcomed death,
“Being broken, bruised and old.

“For *Lo!*—(they said)—*We are of all a part,*
“*And by our labour shall the path be laid,*
“*And men like us shall hearken and take heart,*
“*Nor dying be dismayed.*”

The Greatest Quest is Peace.

I heard one singing in the amber wheat ;
 And hearkening so, there rose within my brain
 An affluent music of strong hands, and sweet
 Long labour 'mong the grain.

Vouchsafed to me are sinews frail as reeds,
 That, weary with the scythe before an hour,
 Hang on the rake in pain, or fell the weeds
 With but a weakling's power.

Wherefore this song is not my own, but his,
 Who, belted tight and bare of arm that day,
 Swung out his blade to meet the sun's hot kiss,
 And shear each sheaf away.

* * * * *

"Lo ! I am bondsman to the satin loam
 "That furrows from the share at Autumn's
 fall ;
 "My gear,—two Clydesdales, cows, the gods of
 home,
 "Good health, and that is all.



I, AN BONDSMAN OF THE
SATIN LEAM.
THAT FURROWS FROM THE SHARE
AT AUTUMN'S FALL.

A. GLOSSOP

1

“Go forth (they said), *there's but a little plot*
“Hard-tempered, lean, and miserly of gain;
 “The world is wide for men, *why seek it not,*
“Being strong of arm and brain?

“What meed is this? (they cried) *Hard work,*
short rest,
“A little leisure for your book and pen;
 “These yokel minds are surely not the best
“To find by cultured men.

“Back to the city, where at least is Life
“Well-ordered, keenly quick to hear and see;
 “Better the tangled intellectual strife
“Than simple husbandry.

“Lo, (I make answer) here is mine abode,
“Until, like grain, I too am gathered in;
 “The circle of these hills shall bound my road,
“My world is here to win.

“And what is life that I should seek it where
“Your cities smoulder in their factory heat?
 “Shall I be less with God for simple fare,
“And labour long and sweet?

"The bondsman craves his freedom ; so would I

"Amid your stony avenues ; but now—

"What would ye more than those blue leagues
of sky ?

"Or radius of my plough ?

"Mine hours of ease are scanty, yet their span

"Is honey-sweet and fragrant. I have known

"The twilight leisure of a toiling man

"Beside his own hearthstone.

"Then every eve the dew falls fresh and cool,

"And always new and fresh the sun and
shower,

"And every similar spring is beautiful,

"And ever new the flower.

"I smell the 'grow' in breathing hedge and
tree ;

"I know the slow still travail of the soil ;

"These fields, long barren, needed mine and
me,—

"I gave them all my toil.

"Vouchsafed to me are affluent health and
strength,

"Strong children well-begot and sanely reared.

“Seasons have failed me; all comes well at
length;

“I doubted not nor feared.

“Even I have lived within the city gate;

“And let me speak with truth, nor here dis-
praise

“Those ample minds that labour long and late

“And happily there always,—

“For these have found their peace in strenuous
life,

“Their quests in markets far away or home.

“The Greatest Quest is Peace even after strife;

“I found mine in the loam.

“The Greatest Quest is Peace. If it should lie

“In the deep core of War, so men will find

“The tender dove even where the eagles cry,

“Or hawks swing down the wind.

“Each to his happiness. I hear the boys

“Shout past me from the highway o’er the
hill;

“My sons shall leave me,—these world-faring
joys

“I know have magic still.

“ But I am bondsman to the satin loam
“ That holds me closer to one simple creed ;
“ Long labour be its shrine,—its temple, Home,—
“ My fields, the world I need.”

The Song of the Sinews.

We are the sinews from the World's beginning,
 We are the bond-folk of the Brain and Will :
 Bear witness, O ! our Lords, since Adam's sinning,
 The covenant abideth still.

So long ago ! The Law is yet the Law primeval,
 The Master still our Master, now as then ;
 Bond are we unto what for good or evil,
 Of old was sealed in striving men.

Not ours the prize ; the work alone fulfils our
 guerdon,
 Our meed the Red Drink and the aching sleep,
 Or that most precious time before our burden,—
 The dozing time we dare not keep.

Wherefore the zest ? Our life indeed is girt and
 bounded
 From dawn to sunset ; yea, within the night,
 Stroke calls to stroke, where in red glare is founded
 Piston and pulley from the furnace white.

Lo, by our toil the furrows all are driven,
Seed-time is thrilled with sunshine and with
shower ;
Hills are unsealed, and from their bowels up-riven
The Sun's old alchemy of power.

Even to the skies we flung the tape, to measure
System and Sun, and that far-wafted way
Which Hera spilled from her embosomed treasure
In Life's dream-laden, pagan day.

Wherefore the zest? the slave may love his labour,
Even to a joy fulfilled in such increase.
Not less we loved the bleak red path of shot and
sabre,
Than bland, fat fields of peace.

Not ours to question what the Master bade us,
But ours to follow out his hope or bane,
Till ache and pang and weariness have laid us
Limp and foredone to sleep again.

We are the sinews from the World's beginning,
Girt in the loins and limbs of striving men
Foredoomed to labour well for Adam's sinning :
That work is with us now as then.

Oh, holy work, strong creed to earth and ocean
And sun and star, foreclosed to idle years;
Lo! we uplift our strength in thy devotion,
With sacrifice of blood and tears,—

That so the Master finding joy in living
By our strong faith, may greet the hour of death,
Wearied and broken, yet with full thanksgiving,
Even to his utmost panting breath;

That we, too, knowing well the time of ending,
Shall sing with all his fibres ere we part :—
“Thrice happy, weary, unto kind death bending,
“Bruised, broken, tired and of good heart.”

Coupeau.

To rid my bane ye give me this,
A tract, a book, a spoken word;
To rid my bane ye take my bliss,—
Behold I love the Thing abhorred.
Can ye go back a thousand years,
And rid my blood of baneful fears?

Ye speak of Hope amid the East,
When Love went by on rosy wings;
Can ye redeem one jot the least
Of all mine old imaginings?
Hope on, ye say, and can ye tell
How paltry seems your Heaven and Hell?

“Perverse,” ye cry, “and steeped in lust
Of this one evil!” ’Fore ye all,
I strike mine oath; I hold in trust
This body. Is your wisdom small?
Or are ye, too, indifferent wise,
Drunken with windy sophistries?

My heart is Nero’s. Can ye say
Why darker should my fancies be

Than yours ; or why this weary way
Be set to will the soul in me ?
For Nero's heart I ask no grace—
The heirloom of a wearied race.

Sapped were we all in fevered years,
Bittered by impotence, arose
The Drouth, O Lethe ! I would steep
my tears
With theirs, and evermore my woes.
Comes to my lips the cup they loved ;
They drink it, feel it, unproved.

Their voice is stronger than your words,
Their unction more to me by far
Then aught of yours, for ill accords
My fate to yours, or what ye are ;
Within the caul they set their seal,
And in my blood they drink and reel.

Go backwards to the first of time,
And ask of Life the reason why
Was sealed on flesh the lust of crime,
The pain of birth, the fear to die ;
Rede me aright, and answer plain—
Then I will read your tracts again.

Adventure.

Above the soundless tide that flowed
Blood-red athwart the wounded sun,
There floated from her far abode,
The Maiden Perilous; she is one
I had long read of in a book,
Who fetters all men by a look.

Her lips were full and taunting sweet,
Her eyes' large lustre pierced me through;
And wreathed about her hidden feet,
A flower-like stole in circles blew;
She looked but once, and passed me by,
Uplifting swiftly in the sky.

Disdain was in her brilliant smile,
And scorn to wound her lovers true,
For well she knows the powerful wile
Of tardy favours, far and few;
And in my heart arose a cry:
"Lo! I will seek thee till I die."

Warm hearts foreclosed an ancient bond,
And dared me then the price to pay:



OH, LADY I MUST FOLLOW THEE
OVER THE MOUNTAIN & THE SEA.

“If ye should seek the world beyond,
“Then hearken to the word we say—
“So will ye bring us to the dust,
“By this, your wild, world-faring lust.”

I hearkened, praying : “Let me bide
Within the hearthlight till I die ;”
And as I prayed, I saw the tide
Blood-red athwart the purple sky ;
And mocking sweet, the Maiden came
And thrilled me through with love and shame.

Am I the least of those that see
The challenge in her brilliant eyes,
That I should tarry? Woe is me,
Since I am young and age is wise ;
Albeit can ye chain the tide,
Or keep the winds from wandering wide?

For as the tide must follow where
The Lady Moon serenely wills,
And as the winds arise and fare
Beyond the colder seas and hills,
Oh, Lady! I must follow thee
Over the mountains and the sea.

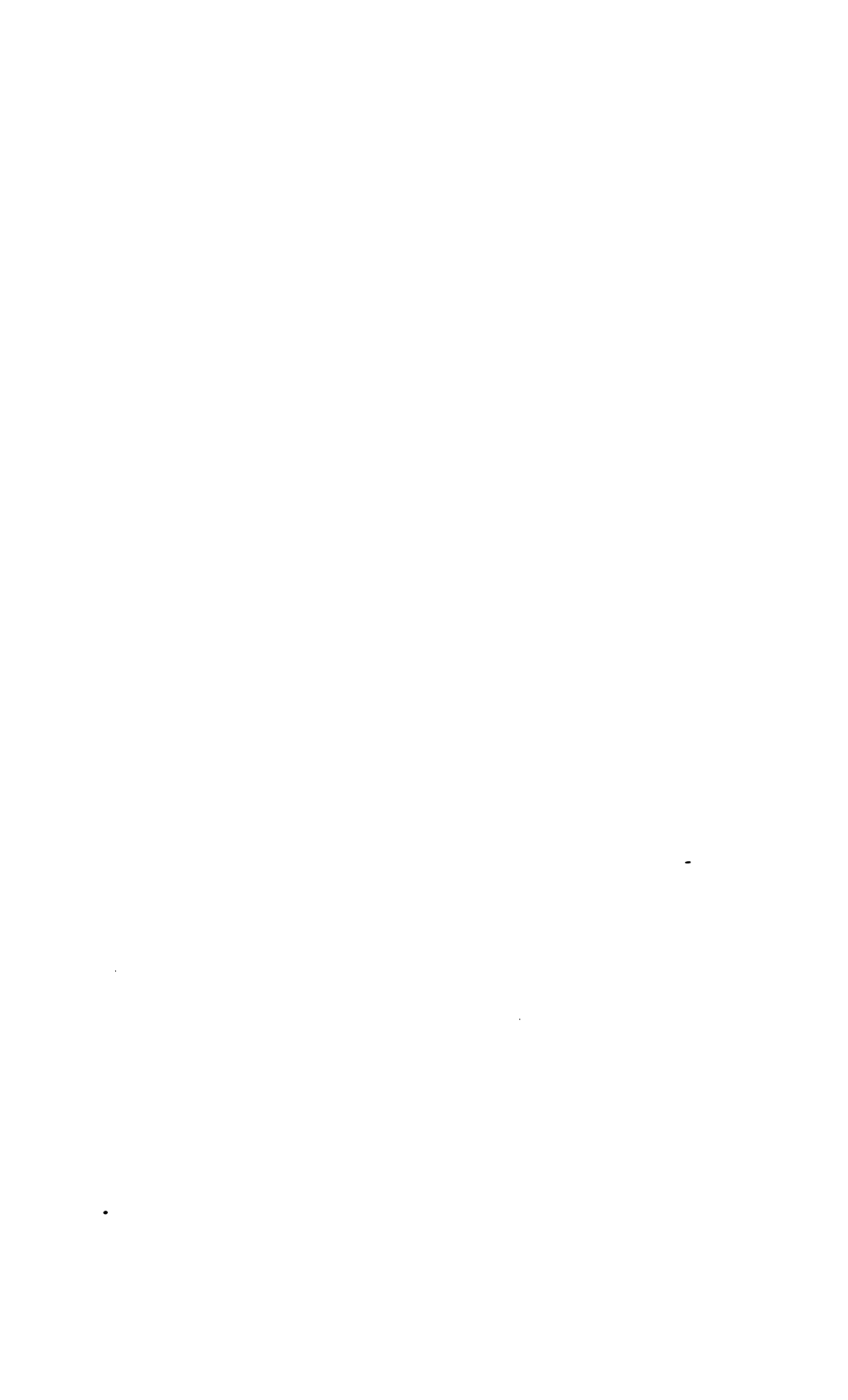
Blue Hills Far Away.

I knew a land and it was mine
 (At least my fancy made it so),
But this was in the auld lang syne,
 Before my beard began to grow ;
And many, many lands I've seen,
 And many, many lands I may,
But mine was in the western sheen,
 With Blue Hills far away.

I envied every joyous bird
 And every boat with sails of brown
And all the winds that seaward stirred
 The smoke above that little town ;
For they were free to leave the shore
 And cross the deep beyond the bay,
And I, I envied them the more,—
 Oh ! Blue Hills far away.



*"Albeit tho' the quest be lost,
My dream is still as yesterday."*



It seemed so like a tender land
That wearied travellers gladly spy
Beyond a toilsome desert sand,
Beneath a hot and brazen sky;
And, oh! I welcomed every eve
That softly closed the weary day,
To see your lonely cones upheave,—
My Blue Hills far away,

I was the mate of wind and gull,
The night's first star was known to me,
The blue dove's nest, the stranded hull,
The cowries shining in the sea;
But you were always thought and theme,
And you were more to me than they,
And you were but a winsome dream,—
Oh! Blue Hills far away.

Oh, always it was "soon and soon,"
But days went by and years were told;
Oh, always it was "soon and soon,"
But still the sea between us rolled;
And still the sea was cold and green,
Or sometimes it was white with spray,
And aye I feared the gulf between,—
My Blue Hills far away.

Oh, always it was "soon and soon,"
And still the birds fled over me;
Oh, always it was "soon and soon,"
And aye the brown sails crossed the sea;
And now the wind said as it passed,
Your cheek is wan, your hair is grey,
And all your dreams must end at last,
Your Blue Hills fade away.

But still I envy all the boats
And all the birds and all the winds
Until my brain forgets its thoughts,
Until my eyes shall draw their blinds.
Albeit tho' the quest be lost,
My dream is still as yesterday,
For age is sweetened with your ghost,—
Dear Blue Hills far away.

Faring Men.

THE WAIL OF THE MOTHERS.

Why bide ye not in this your day,
 In this your little isle?
 Wealth may not find ye far away,
 And at the farthest mile
 Death waits you there as here. Alack,
 For all the loved that come not back!

So long we loved ye, hearken then!
 And hearkening give us peace;
 God wot, the joy of faring men
 Is grief without surcease
 Within our thresholds, since we take
 Sorrow as children for your sake.

Speak not to us that, growing old,
 Cling to one olden faith;
 Fain are we for your hands to hold
 In travail of our death,
 Speak not to us of youth's unrest,
 Here in the Homeland, home is best.

* * *

THE SPEECH OF THE FATHERS.

Tarry not with us, for we know
Youth ever hungers for the quest;
And being men we bid ye go,
Whether the East call or the West.
Gather experience as ye fare—
For ours, alas! ye do not care.

Ask no man's succour, if thereby
Ye barter manhood for a fee;
Cool be your brow and keen your eye,
In whatsoe'er your lot may be.
Whither ye go, let these words bide—
"Quit ye like men, whate'er betide."

* * *

THE ANSWER OF THE SONS.

Our hearts are famished where we move,
In paths our fathers trod before,
And half-distraught we may not prove
By reason, what our hearts implore;
Still in our eyes the quest is keen,
What though the leagues be great between

Our blood runs leaping when we read
Of strife and tumult far away,
Of wistful lands that lonely plead
Their wanton largesse in decay.
We may not answer by the book,
But in the fervour of a look.

The call is with us night and day,
Our dreams fulfil our hearts' desire;
Baneful the love that bids us stay
In bondage to one little shire.
Sinew and brain, together cry—
“Oh, for the wide world ere we die.”

Renunciation.

The mother's arms are tender bonds the boy
delights to feel,

In days when giant shadows swoop upon him
from the wall ;

The mother's arms are selfish bonds that hurt
and clasp like steel,

When the young man looking seaward hears
the call.

"Bide with me, love, until mine eyes look last upon
your face,

"Here in the hearth-light dwelling since I
danced you on my knee,

"How many quit the homeland, leaving neither
track nor trace,

"And who are they would wile my boy from
me?"

The mother's heart is warm and kind and rich in
sacrifice,

For ill or grief her bosom hath the simple and
the balm,

But when a man forgoes the Quest, she knows
not of the price
Or the torture and the storm beneath the calm.

For sinews crying out for work in fruitful lands
untilled,
A little glebe the mother thinks will surely
well repay ;
While brains that ache with leaping thought and
promise unfulfilled,
Must taunt her boy and mock him night and
day.

Ah, love is warm and tyrannous and selfish in
its tears,
And happiness is ours to find wherever it may
be ;
And some there are who find it best in fierce and
strenuous years,
Leaving for witness but a man's work oversea.

America.

Within a little parish cooped and bounded,
 The sea-wind thrilled me into thoughts of thee,—
 Great nation of the wide world's best compounded,
 Keen-eyed and sinewy, affluent and free.

My kin forsook their farm of peace and hunger,
 Forswore their witless labor in the field
 That sapped them for the laird when I was
 younger,
 And in thy prairies found a plenteous yield.

Thou art of us yet not of us; thy races
 Commingle and adjust in many a type,
 But thou hast set the keen eye in their faces,
 Square-chinned and vigorous for thy purpose
 ripe.

Around thy sons thou hast not bound the fetter
 Of old convention, and thy daughters fair
 Conform to their sweet nature, trusting better
 A wholesome freedom than a stifling care.

Wherefore thy march is swift, alert, and forceful ;
Nor wilt thou spare the means to make the end,
Nor halt with those who are like thee, resourceful,
But show less forethought of the market's trend.

Not one can say how far thou'lt reach or ripen,
Nor what with years thy vigorous youth may
bear
To these worn lands time-scarred and deeply
bitten
By rust of ancient rite, and mould of care.

Thou hast resolved and fused now so many
Contrasting peoples under one great name,
And set for all one purpose stern as any
Fulfilled by labor for thy wealth and fame,

That others blinded by foul hate or passion,
Or iron-bound in grooves they dare not leave,
Cajole with falsehood or with envious caution
To dim the glory which thy sons achieve.

What matter ! life with thee is swift and hustling,
With keen endeavour and with healthy strife,
With growing markets where thy sons are jostling
The old-world sleepy-heads to active life.

The Bridge-Builders.

They hearkened not at cavil, nor heeded those
who jeered,

Their hands were red with labour, their bodies
worn and seared ;

And with their bones, my brothers, this golden
bridge was reared.

But how the first folk builded, go ask the secret
core

Of the highest, loneliest mountain, or bleak, in-
volute shore,

And the veriest child were wiser, and ye would
ask no more.

Their strength went out in darkness, and still the
mallets rang,

The trowels clinked between the stones, and every
stone a pang ;

And when the old dropped moaning, the young
arose and sang.

Swingingly and together, or lonely and apart,
They saw the baby piers arise, the building
 arches start,
And the keystone of their labour was ever a
 broken heart.

Wild floods raved through the valleys and
 shouldered down their pride,
And twenty years went toppling in thunder with
 the tide ;
They worked the harder for the loss, but in the
 dark they sighed.

The fever ripened in them, the palsy smote their
 hands,
Dawn rose upon them sleepless, red-eyed and
 weak as wands ;
Death held his sickle o'er their work, and Time
 his running sands.

For Death alone they halted and fell across the
 way ;
The dust of years blew over and hid them all
 away ;
But the children, crowding forward, over their
 bodies play.

Interlude.

What can I think of now that noon is bright?

Fair women on the river, lazing low

On cushioned seats, 'neath parasols aglow

Like yellow poppies shading lilies white,—

Banter as airy as the careless wings

Of butterflies, that seek nowhere to go

Save one slow beam where motes swim to and
fro,—

Ah, these indeed are sweet imaginings.

Let me uplift from sad, shade-seeking care,

Quaff sunlight from the beaker freely spilled,

And sing a pagan song to earth and air,

Careless of all things save pure joy fulfilled;

Holding it sacrilege to give one sigh

For other moments that went shivering by.

Here let me idle out the sun-shot day,

Dreaming of pretty things and happy life,

Earnest in nothing, save in being gay,

So will I rest me, and forego the strife,

Nor give one thought to cities red and gray

Wherein my days were choked and hid away.





"I saw Three Crosses in the dusk,
Where bones hung dry and white."

Three Phases.

I saw three Crosses on a hill,
Three bodies hung thereon.
And on the Midmost crucified,
A beam of Heaven shone.

I saw three Crosses in the dusk,
Where bones hung dry and white,
A vulture sat on the Midmost Cross,
And screamed against the night.

I do not see these Crosses now,
Mine eyes are strained in vain,
But that vulture's claws are on my heart
And his beak is in my brain.

Bel Cedarval.

My piety hath none other mood
 To-night, than dreaming of a shrine,—
 A little gate rose-hung and rude,
 But haloed in a light divine.

Beneath the eucalyptus shade
 A coloured maid is singing low
 Some wise sweet song a poet made
 For other lovers, long ago.

Moths in the moonlight drifting by,
 Like summer rose-leaves see them fall;
 So drift my thoughts far seaward, nigh
 Dear Bel,
 Bel Cedarval!

She was so little, shy and dear,
And in her eyes I seek again
The mercy of the gloaming, here,
To soothe and hide away the pain ;

Gray eyes that even amid the moon,
Held gloaming's Christ-like afterglow ;
Such mercy that is more a boon
Than any I can find or know.

Sing softly and in simple wise,
O heart, because the muses call,
A song for Bel's Madonna-eyes,
Dear Bel,
Bel Cedarval !

Toiling All Night.

Twenty leagues from home,
In a sea I think the worst,
And I'm fain for a glass o' rum,
And the skipper growled amain,
And he strode the deck and cursed ;

And he champed his sooty clay,
Or swore at the wind and spume,
For the sheet we bent that day
Was split, and, hap what may,
He'd curse thro' the crack o' doom.

All black was the windward-eye
With never a blink o' sun
And never a patch o' sky ;
What hope for a lull, thought I,
When the span of the day was done ?
Twenty leagues from the blazing peat,
And the warm clay walls and the ingle-seat !

While seas ahead and astern
Open their maws of green

And snap them close while they mourn,
Like weary beasts that are torn
By the thongs of the wind so keen.

While the spindrift over the bows
Comes sharp with its salt like steel,
And the night grows black at the brows,
And sour and dank flies the scud,
And dim grows the man at the wheel.

Wee Jimmy, that's only a bairn,
Turned white at the gills with dread
And lay by the windlass forlorn,
And the tears rolled sharply and warm,
On his blue clasped hands while he prayed

And we that are bearded men
Betimes for the tears are fain ;
Toiling all night on the raw North Sea,
Hungry and cold and weary are we,
Toiling for cod and ling ;
While the good wife cowers at the point of
the quay,
Feeble with dread for the man that may be
But as wrack with the weeds that are tossed
by the sea,—
A useless and cumbersome thing.

Extracts from a Litany.

I

Once in a garden when the rose was blown
 And swung upon the wavy breath of June,
 Love laughed among the bushes in the moon.
 Ah, we were wise and told him to begone ;
 "Go hence," she said, "go, for thou art no
 boon ;"
 Love sighed, and laughed, and left us both alone,

"Oh, love," she said, "Thou canst not mate with
 me,
 My God and thine would claim a different
 vow ;
 Better that all things ended here and now,
 Better my heart break than our faith should be
 Forsworn. Ah, let me go my way, and thou
 Go also in the way that pleaseth thee."



Once in a garden when the rose was blown
And swung upon the wavy breath of June,
Love laughed among the bushes in the moon,

Love laughed among the roses clear and plain ;
A bird's voice rippled like a rill of air
Inwove with moonbeams ; all the world was
fair.

God whispered to our hearts, " If love be vain
Then vain is life, and vain is faith and
prayer ;"
And as we heard we laughed and kissed again.

II.

Can ye constrain the music of the bird
By hate, or weave the chalice of the flower
By some device to hold the sun and shower,
And melt the moonbeams in one little word ?
All things vouchsafe his sweetness and his
power,
For Love is honey-lipped and Love is lord.

Lo, when he comes, the homeliest face grows fair,
The loveliest face more lovely ; all things turn
A rosy cheek towards us, and we burn
With burning hope that fires our hearts to dare,
Even as a curtain twitches or a flower is worn ;
All else were well forgot, if Love be there.

III.

Love wears a mask of banter and of wit,
And in the night will tear that mask away,
Until the dawn like some dim ghost of gray,
Steals through the blind and o'er the coverlet,
While lean and laggard sleep with breaking
day
Droops o'er the swollen eyes that waited it.

Love is both shy and bold, constrained and free ;
Puck's laughter brims his eyes or Pity's tears,
To-day suffices him, or long lost years
Do haunt his dreams ; and oft his April glee
Dissolves in April rain, and oft his voice
appears
Half sorrow and half joy, half mirth, half misery.

IV.

Love yields to Life the mystery of birth,
The power to weave within a little cell
A million tissues. None may know or tell
How Death and Life within the rain-soothed
earth
Unclosed the seedling's husk, or how there
fell
Upon the womb the seal to bring us forth.

Behind is Night and on before is Night,
Only this sun-swept highway where we meet
Seems known, and even here the decades
beat
All things to dust with slow unresting might ;
Change softly draws on change, nor slow nor
fleet,
But like a light that faded in a light.

What more to dare ? Ah, let our hearts have
faith ;
So long we suffered and so long we strove.
“How flows the sequel as the centuries
move ?
“How looms the end ?”—The wearied people
saith.
And Life looks up to Life and Love to
Love,
And then beyond to those sealed shores of
Death.

V.

Ah, let us make our little Heaven here,
So all may love their labour and the state.
Not all may see it, but in hope we wait,
Unheeding how they taunt or how they sneer;
Strong will our people grow to compass
fate,
And stronger for the weakness and the fear.

VI.

Now I will raise mine altar. I will pray
For work that though it leave me tired and
bruised,
I will take hold with every fibre fused
In one set aim, and happily sing away
Of one sweet Faith not tangled nor con-
fused,
Nor fenced against our progress day by day.

The Book of Life is ever open wide,
And I can read by poignant line and page
The words wherein is told our pilgrimage

To some more noble Canaan ; God will guide
Our thoughts, for God moves forward with
the age,
And flows and ebbs through all things like a
tide.

VII.

I dream of Death, and when I dream I see
One set above the hills and gazing down
Upon the valleys filled with busy town
And lazy dorp ; a giant form is he
Mantled in night, grave-eyed and with a crown
Of stars, while far beneath are light and grief
and glee.

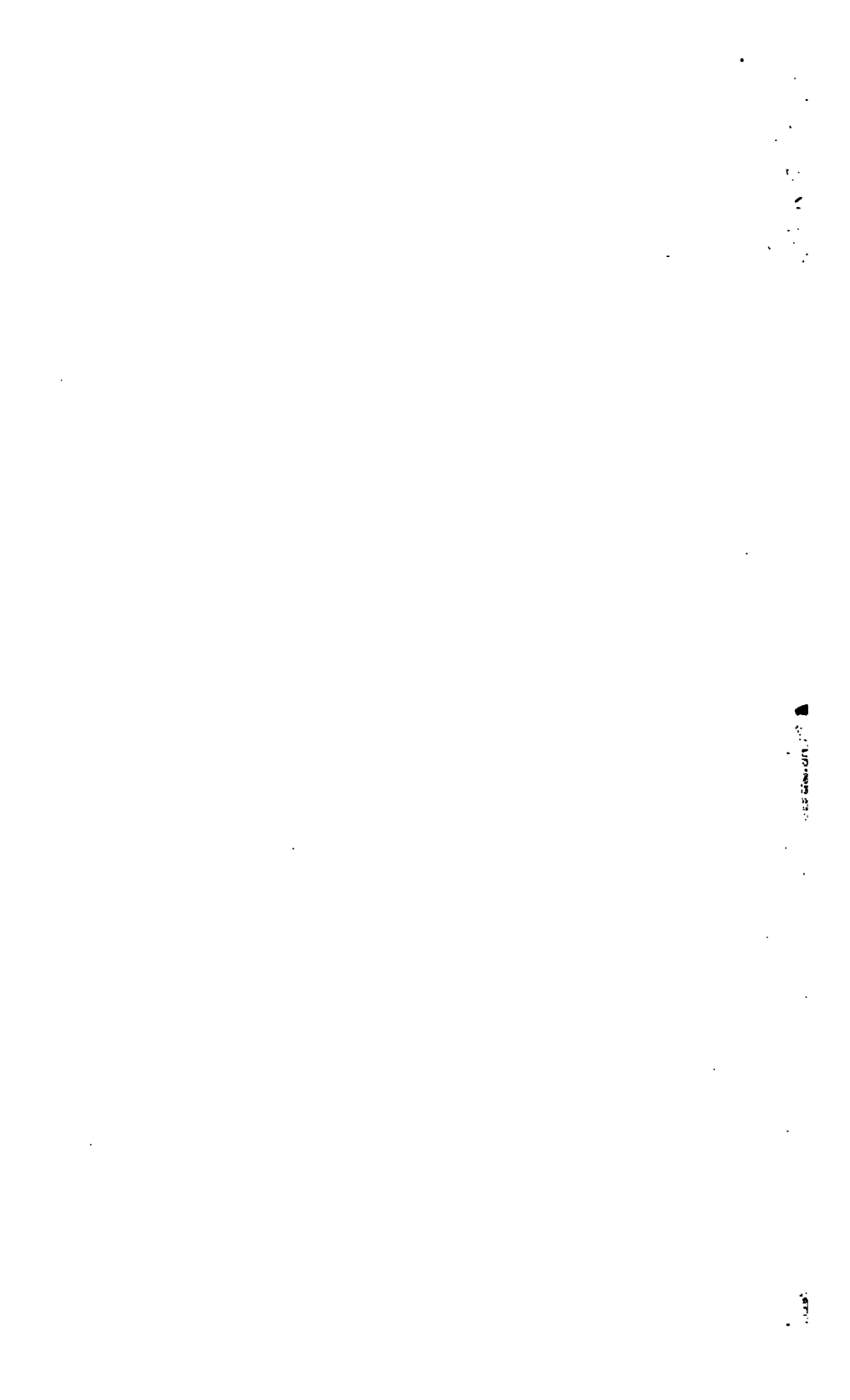
Leaning his cheek upon his open palm,
And on his knee an elbow, unto him
The tired world heaves a shoulder vast and
dim,
And with the greatening gloom a greatening
calm
Steals outwards, like a wave's far-reaching
brim,
That touches all things with a sobering qualm.

VIII.

I dream of Death, and when I dream I hear
The great earth-mother crooning at my feet,
And all the rain-fed runnels slow and sweet
That vein her bosom flowing far and near ;
All things dissolved in rain and sunny heat
Are flowing back to life from darkness drear.

But we return no more, and yon fair face
Is sealed away for ever in the sod ;
And yon sweet form is but an earthy clod
Whereto the little rain rills now may race
And melt away. Ah, this is hard, dear God !
Her voice I cannot hear ; her path I cannot
trace.





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